

Story 1868 (1995 Tape 5)

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Location: Denizli, the capital city
of Denizli Province

Date: August 10, 1995

The Wishes of Three Castaways

There were three shipwrecked travelers who lived together on a small island for three years. During those three years they had not seen or talked to anyone besides themselves. They grew tired of being with each other constantly, day and night.

One day one of these castaways found a bottle that had washed up on the shore of the island. After some difficulty, he was able to remove the cap from it. As soon as the bottle was open, a jinn¹ came out of it. The jinn spoke to the three castaways, one of whom was from France, one of whom was from England, and the third was a Laz²

¹The word jinn suggests two very different kinds of supernatural creatures. The first is the huge supernatural being who comes forth from a bottle or appears in response to some signal, such as the rubbing of a magic lamp or ring. This creature then proceeds to give the caller supernatural or magic aid to achieve what he wishes. The other kind of jinn is never seen. It is a spiritual force referred to in some Sufi beliefs and in other mystical systems.

²The word Laz referred originally to an ethnic minority living primarily in Trabzon and Rize provinces, along the extreme eastern part of the Turkish Black Sea coast. More recently the word has come to be applied to any resident of the entire Turkish Black Sea coast. In the Turkish oral tradition Laz people are stereotyped as being stupid or inept. This stereotype (like most others) is unjustifiable, for Lazes are, of course, much like other people.

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named Temel³ from the Black Sea coast of Turkey. The jinn said to the three men, “Ask for what you want, and I shall see to it that it is granted to you.”

When the Frenchman said, “I should like to visit Hawaii with my family,” the jinn had them sent there.

The Englishman said, “I should like to spend a night with Brigitte Bardot⁴ in a luxurious hotel.” He was sent immediately to have his wish fulfilled.

Then it was the turn of Temel to tell the jinn what he wished. He said, “You have sent away the only company I had here. I am lonely here by myself. My wish is that you send my friends back to me.” His wish was also granted.

³In tales about the stereotyped Laz as dummer or fool, the male characters usually have one or another of five or six very common Laz names. Temel is the name used most often, with Dursun in second place. Thus if either of these names occurs in a folktale, the audience knows at once that it is a Laz tale.

⁴French actress and sex image of the 1960s.